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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: GOI ON NEIGHBORS PROCESS SECURITY WORKING GROUP:
NEED FOR DETAILED SECURITY PLANS

Classified By: By Political Counselor Robert S. Ford for reasons 1.4(b)
and (d).

¶1. (C) Deputy Foreign Minister Labeed Abbawi told Political Military Counselor and Deputy Political Counselor September 18 that the GOI is moving ahead on plans to host the next Expanded Iraq Neighbors Ministerial meeting in Baghdad in November. He said that Jordan had just notified the MFA that it could not host the next meeting of the Neighbors Process security working group in Jordan, a request the GOI had made to take advantage of the fact that Interior Ministers would already be in Amman for the Arab League Interior Ministers meeting on October 20. Abbawi said the GOI will ask again, and noted that the Egyptians had offered to host the meeting.

(Note: In an separate discussion on September 17, MFA Neighboring Countries Director Taha al-Abassi informed us of Jordan's negative decision, but said the GOI was now working to have Syria host the next security working group meeting, and Jordan host the next refugees working group - both in October prior to the envisioned November Neighbors Ministerial. End Note.) Abbawi said the energy working group would meet in Istanbul in early October.

¶2. (C) Abbawi said that the two previous Neighbors Process security working group meetings had focused on process rather than practical discussion on how to improve Iraq's border security. He said the upcoming meeting should include more focus on practical aspects and the need for detailed security plans that outline specific responsibilities for each country and modalities for their implementation. For example, it would be useful to get each of the neighboring countries to make the liaison officers (supposedly established under the process) more effective. PolMil Counselor noted that the USG and UN had sent experts to the security meetings to address practical steps but that there had been no time allotted for expert discussions at either meeting. Abbawi conceded the point and said a French expert on border issues from the UN recently was advising the GOI for two weeks on how to address border security. He endeavored to work harder to make the next border security meeting more practical and effective.

¶3. (C) Abbawi agreed with PolMil Counselor that border security needs to be raised with the Syrians. He lamented that Syria is not doing enough to secure its borders with Iraq. The GOI is exerting every effort, he said; Syria is not doing its share. Abbawi agreed with PolMil Counselor's observation that Iran had been obstructionist in previous border security meetings, and that this would likely remain a challenge. In contrast, he noted, the Egyptians, although overly focused on their Arab leadership role and procedural matters, ultimately do not obstruct a meaningful outcome. Abbawi said he planned to confer with counterparts in the GOE beforehand so that the Iraqi and Egyptian delegations would come to the working group meeting with coordinated positions that would optimize chances for concrete results.

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